

**What is the definition of a motorcycle?**

A motorcycle is a motor vehicle designed and built to have no more than 3 wheels. It must have its own power source capable of speeds in excess of 30 m.p.h. with a 150 pound rider, under ideal road conditions.

**Who needs a Class M – Motorcycle license?**

Anyone who drives a motorcycle must have a Class M motorcycle license or motorcycle instruction permit. (Moped drivers do not have the same licensing requirements. They must have a Class D regular, probationary, or special license restricted to moped use.)

**What are the requirements for a Class M License?**

A person must hold a Wisconsin motorcycle instruction permit or surrender a valid motorcycle license from another state before they may obtain a Class M license. Successful completion of a rider course is required for persons who fall under any one of the following:

- are under 18
- held three previous motorcycle instruction permits
- previously failed two DOT-administered motorcycle skill tests

Rider courses are highly recommended for anyone who wants to ride a motorcycle or who wants to improve their motorcycle riding skills.

**What rider courses are offered?**

There are two motorcycle rider courses; successful completion of either course can be used for point reduction of motorcycle violations. See “Traffic Safety Programs” for more information on point reduction.

The 16-hour **Basic Rider Course** is designed for beginning riders. The course was developed and the instructors are certified by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and Wisconsin DOT. It is taught off-street, out of traffic, and motorcycles and helmets are provided. The course consists of 9 hours of classroom and 11 hours of on-cycle instruction, including the following: preparing to ride; turning, shifting and braking; street strategies; special situations; increasing riding skills; maintenance, and insurance. The course is offered by most of the vocational colleges in Wisconsin and a few other organizations. A person may get a waiver of the skills test upon successful completion of this course, providing other licensing requirements are met.

The **Experienced Rider Course** is an advanced motorcycle safety course with a minimum of 8 hours of instructions. This is available to persons who have a Class M license.

**How does the Motorcycle Skills Test Waiver Program work?**

Upon successful completion of a basic rider course (on or after January 1, 1992), the motorcycle riding instructor issues each student a signed waiver authorization form. This form is usable only by the person to whom it is issued, and is only usable one time. The form must be presented to a DOT examiner, and when other licensing requirements have been met and the motorcycle skills test is waived, an authorization to operate Class M vehicles will be added to the person’s driver’s license. The Waiver Program sets standards for and administers these waivers.

**How is a Class M license obtained?**

To obtain a motorcycle instruction permit, the applicant must pass the motorcycle knowledge test. Additional tests such as Class D knowledge test, highway signs test, and vision and hearing screening may be required.

The applicant must demonstrate competency in motorcycle operation by passing a DOT-administered motorcycle skills test or providing a waiver showing completion of DOT approved basic rider course.

For the skills test, the applicant must provide a cycle in good working order and wear eye protection and an approved helmet. Skills tests are conducted by appointment at DMV Service Centers located throughout the state.

**What are the fees and period of validity?**

A motorcycle instruction permit is \$22 and is valid for 6 months. The original Class M license is \$12 plus a \$15 fee if a skills test is required. The Class M license is valid for 8 years or whenever the basic license expires and has a \$8 renewal fee.

**Are there special requirements for the operation of motorcycles?**

Eye protection is required for all operators with instruction permits and those operators whose cycle does not have a windshield rising at least 15 inches above the handlebars. Headlights and taillights must remain on at all times while driving on public roadways. Approved helmets must be worn by motorcycle operators under 18 years old, passengers under 18 years old and operators with instruction permits. Permit holders may ride alone during the day. If cycling after dark, the permit holder must be accompanied by a person at least 25 years old with two years licensed driving experience and a Class M motorcycle license.

**For more information contact:**

Bureau of Driver Services

For Motorcycle License:  
Records and Licensing Information Section  
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